REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the April 21, 2006. Claims 1 to 25 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 7, 21 and 23 to 25 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

All claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), primarily over U.S. Patent 5,911,044 (Lo) in view of U.S. Patent 6,208,436 (Cunningham), further in view of U.S. Patent 5,768,483 (Maniwa '483), and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,581,098 (Kumpf '098). In addition, certain ones of the dependent claims were rejected further in view of one or more of the following: U.S. Patent 6,289,371 (Kumpf '371), U.S. Patent 6,168,444 (Cukor), and U.S. Patent 6,223,223 (Kumpf '223). Reconsideration and withdrawal of all of these rejections are respectfully requested.

As explained in prior responses to Office Actions, the invention concerns fulfillment of a scan order over a computer network, in which a scan setting is input at a computer terminal such that when a computer comprising an order entry server (more specifically, a directory service module) retrieves a scanner node, it retrieves a scanner node having a scan capability corresponding to the input scan setting.

According to one representative embodiment of the invention illustrated in Figures 4 and 5, there is an access of a user interface which permits input of a scan order from a local terminal (step 410), an input of desired scanner settings and a parameter through the user interface (step 415), and a reconciliation of the inputted scanner settings and parameters against a capability profile of each scanner node designated in the scan

order (step 420). Figure 5 illustrates the reconciliation process, and shows that there is a retrieval from a directory service module of a capability profile of each scanner node in the scan order (step 510) together with a comparison of the retrieved capability profiles of the scanner nodes with the scan order (step 515), so as to determine whether there is a retrieval of a scanner node having a suitable scan capability corresponding to the input scan setting.

By virtue of retrieval of the scanner node with the aforementioned procedures, a requestor is provided with the ability to indicate a scan setting with which the requestor wants to scan an image, such that a scanner node is retrieved which can scan by the scan setting from among plural scanner nodes, for subsequent scanning by the retrieved scanner node.

The foregoing amendments to the claims emphasize the point that the scan order for scanning by the retrieved scanner node also includes an input scan setting. That is, according to the invention, the input scan setting is reflected in the scan order before a scanner node is retrieved, such that when a scanner node is found which can scan by using the input scan setting, the input scan setting can be used as the scan setting for the scan order. This process leads to a simplification for creating the scan order and a simplification by which scanning according to the required scan settings can be executed.

The foregoing amendments further emphasize the point that it is a directory server module which retrieves a scanner node having a suitable scan capability corresponding to the input scan setting. That is, and with reference to the representative embodiment of the invention described in the specification, it is not necessarily the computer terminal 105 that retrieves the scanner node, but rather it is order entry server

115 (which corresponds to the directory service module 230) that retrieves the scanner node having a suitable scan capability corresponding to the input scan settings.

In entering the rejection over Lo in view of Cunningham, Maniwa '483 and Kumpf '098, the Office Action conceded that all of Lo, Cunningham and Maniwa '483 fail to disclose retrieval of a scanner node. For this feature, reliance was placed on Kumpf '098, but it is respectfully submitted that particularly given the current amendments that there is a significant difference between the structure of the present invention and that of Kumpf '098.

For its part, Kumpf '098 discloses that in connection with a multifunction peripheral (MFP) 16, and MFP server 10 sends a service name look-up command to MFP 16 in response to receipt of the service name look-up name from client 14, and thereafter sends the reply received from MFP 16 back to client 14. According to Kumpf '098, this enables client 14 to recognize the services that MFP 16 has the capability of executing.

This functionality is therefore different from the structure of the present invention. In Kumpf '098, there is a preparatory query of MFP 16 in order to obtain its capabilities, and it is only after the capabilities are identified that a scan order is created for MFP 16. In particular, the scan order is created only within the range of the identified services that MFP 16 is capable of providing. Under such conditions, the requestor (client 14) must modify his scan settings so that they comply with the capabilities of MFP 16. This differs from the invention, since according to the invention, a scanning node is retrieved such that the retrieved scanning node has a suitable scan capability corresponding to an input scan setting. Thus, in the structure of Kumpf '098, the requestor (client

computer 14) must modify its scan settings so that they fall within the capabilities of MFP 16, whereas in the invention, the client is able to set scan settings as desired, and a scanner node is retrieved having a suitable scan capability corresponding to the scan setting.

Furthermore, in Kumpf '098, the service name look-up command is executed only for look-up of the service, which tends to complicate the procedures that are needed when creating the scan order.

The Office Action asserted that MFP server 10 could connect to a plurality of different multifunction peripherals. However, according to the Applicant's understanding of Kumpf '098, the service name look-up command must be sent to each individual MFP 16, even if plural ones of them are available, so that client 14 must carry out troublesome procedures such as sending a command, inspecting the results of the required MFP, and creating a scan order as many times as the number of different multifunction peripherals.

On the contrary, the present invention does not suffer from such disadvantages, since the appropriate scanner node is retrieved based on the scan setting which is reflected in the scan order. Moreover, the scan order also includes the scan settings by which the retrieved scanner node performs scanning.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that the claims herein define subject matter that would not have been obvious from any permissible combination of the applied references, and withdrawal of the § 103(a) rejections is therefore respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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